

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland.

□ 1700

Mr. GILCHREST. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, there has been a great deal of dialogue in the last few weeks about this issue of Dubai Ports World controlling U.S. ports. What I would like to do with this amendment, Mr. Chairman, is to explain what the Dubai Ports World issue is, and in the process, hope my colleagues will vote in favor of this amendment which strikes the section of the supplemental appropriations bill, the section 3011.

I would at first like to give some frame of reference as to what it means to be the Dubai Ports World, which basically has purchased P&O, a British firm, that works with scheduling for the loading and unloading of cargo at our Nation's ports.

The Baltimore Sun, which is a newspaper in Maryland that represents the Port of Baltimore, one of the largest ports in the United States, says the following: "Potentially lost in this uproar is a clear understanding of what a stevedore company does." Stevedore, that is what the Dubai Ports World is going to do. They are going to employ stevedores.

For the record, its employees, of Dubai Ports World, do not touch any cargo. No employee of the Dubai Ports World touches cargo. They are not in charge of port security. They do not oversee shipping manifests. That means they don't know what is in the containers. Stevedores, which is what the Dubai Ports World is going to be, are the middle managers who tell longshoremen, who are Americans, who are employed by the ports, who are employed by the State and local governments that control the ports, the longshoremen are the ones that load and unload the cargo.

Dubai Ports World will be able to tell them when that ship is going to dock and how to unload it. USA Today, many foreign companies, including one from Singapore, China and Taiwan, are doing business today at U.S. ports, leasing some terminals, to schedule the loading and unloading.

General Tommy Franks, this is what General Tommy Franks says about this particular issue: I personally believe that we have no greater ally in seeking a resolution of problems in the Middle East, the Palestinian issue, the Israeli issue, than we have found in the United Arab Emirates.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, this quote, and there are quotes from every major newspaper in this country, this is a quote from The New York Times: "Dubai is not a democracy, and it is not without its warts. But Dubai is a bridge of decency that leads away from the failing civilization to a much more optimistic, open and self-confident society. Dubaians are building a future based on butter, not guns; private prop-

erty, not caprice; services more than oil and globally competitive companies, not terror networks. Dubai is about nurturing Arab dignity through success, not suicide. As a result, its people want to embrace the future, not blow it up.

Dubai, the United Arab Emirates. We have a difficult, nearly impossible situation in Iraq, difficulties in the Arab world. Who do we need most to bridge the gap of the lack of knowledge? Who do we need most in the Arab world to connect and bridge that gap between the United States and that culture? It is the United Arab Emirates.

It is time for us to recognize that this is an ally that we need to integrate with the United States as far as global issues and global terror issues are concerned.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN (Mr. BOOZMAN). The gentleman is recognized for 10 minutes.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield half that time to my colleague from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY).

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Without objection, the gentleman from Wisconsin will control 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Mr. Chairman, this has been a very frustrating day. I can remember when this place used to be a legislative body. Now it has unfortunately become 99 percent a political institution, and even the politics of the institution doesn't seem to be working out too well on either side of the aisle.

What we have before us now is a holy picture debate. This is a Potemkin amendment. It is a Potemkin debate, and it is another example of how Congress has been reduced to dealing in symbols rather than dealing with substance.

We have had this country in a frenzy about the Dubai involvement in American ports over the past couple of weeks. The Appropriations Committee had a vote, and by vote of 62 to 2, the committee adopted an amendment by the distinguished chairman of the committee, Mr. LEWIS, which shut off the ability of the Dubai company to make their purchase of American port facilities.

We tried, in the committee, to make that action more rational by also establishing a process under which we would have a regularized notice to our government every time such a transaction is being proposed. The committee saw fit to turn that down.

We are now out on the floor. What is going on now is that there is such a frenzy to have every single member of the House also on record on this issue, that we now have a faux debate going

on. As I read this, the only purpose of this debate today is to allow every Member of the House to cast a vote. It is what I call a holy picture vote, and it means that when the votes come, this amendment is going to be overwhelmingly defeated.

The only purposes I see that will have been accomplished by taking this time, is that Members will then have a vote in their pocket that they can take home and brag to people about. I admire the gentleman from Maryland and his willingness to be a sacrificial lamb on the amendment. I know that one or two people on this side of the aisle, such as Mr. MORAN, share his view, and I admire them for their courage.

I have to say that I really am frustrated to see on this, and a number of other amendments today and tomorrow, this House is going to deal with these issues in a symbolic manner rather than discussing it in a thorough, systematic way that might bring some additional credit to the House.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GILCHREST. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I don't feel like I am a sacrificial lamb, and I am not doing this for any other purpose other than to give our strongest ally in the Middle East, the United Arab Emirates, the dignity that they deserve. There are Americans that feel they can do this in a most positive fashion.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN).

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, I thank my good friend from Maryland.

Mr. Chairman, I have no illusions about the results of this vote. It is going to be pretty much proportionate to the 62-2 vote that we took in the full Appropriations Committee. Mr. KOLBE and I being in the minority. But I want to share with my colleagues why this is the wrong thing to be doing.

The fact is that Dubai is our natural bridge to the modern, peaceful and progressive Arab world, and, with this amendment, instead of crossing that bridge, we blow it up.

The fact is that we currently have over 600 ships that are using Dubai, U.S. naval vessels. We have more than 77,000 military personnel who take leave in Dubai, and we have never had a security incident. In fact, more U.S. military personnel take liberty, port leave, in other words, in the United Arab Emirates today than in any other place in the entire world.

The UAE wants to be our friend. They want to invest some of those petro-dollars back in the United States. They want to modernize. They want, in fact, to trade with Israel. They want to trade with Europe. They want to trade with the United States. They are under a lot of political pressure, but, in fact, the emirs are standing up to that pressure.

Couldn't we be expected to do the same? Are we going to yield to the fear